DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1.   The drawings were received on 12/30/09. These drawings are acceptable.

Allowable Subject Matter

2.   Claims 6, 8-15 are allowed.

3.   The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: A thorough search

for prior art fails to disclose any reference or references, which taken alone or in combination,

teach or suggest, in combination with the other limitations, "an operation change over process of,

when said current runner character arrives at the operation change over position, along with

displaying said next runner character at the position of said current runner character, also

inhibiting operation signals from the operator of said current runner character, and making

effective an operation signal from the operator of the next runner character" in combination with

"a change over timing display process of providing a display which shows timing of operation

change over on the game screen of the operator of said next runner character, based on the

change over timing information calculated by the change over timing calculation process". The

closest prior art is Square Co. LTD. (JP Pub. No. 2002-2329246) and Chocobo Racing (Released

October 31, 1999). Square Co. LTD. discloses a fighting game in which two characters on a

screen battle. Square Co. LTD. also discloses a tag-team type game mode in which after a certain

amount of hit points for a character are reached, the control of a character may be relinquished to

another controller. However, Square Co. LTD. structurally and functionally lacks the means for

providing a change over timing display which displays a timer based on the distance of the

character to a reference point. For at least these reasons, claims 6, 10, 13 and the claims

dependent thereon are allowed over Square Co. LTD. or any other prior art of record, taken alone

or in combination. Chocobo Racing discloses a racing game in which a player controls a racing

character on a display. Chocobo Racing discloses a relay-race mode in which the player may

choose three characters that change to the next chosen character when the current racing

character completes a lap. However, Chocobo Racing structurally and functionally lacks the

means for providing a change over timing display which displays a timer based on the distance

of the character to a reference point. For at least these reasons, claims 6, 10, 13 and the claims

dependent thereon are allowed over Chocobo Racing or any other prior art of record, taken alone

or in combination.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the

payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue

fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for

Allowance."

Conclusion

4.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the

examiner should be directed to ANDREW KIM whose telephone number is (571)272-1691. The

examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joe Cheng can be reached on 571-272-4433. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Joe H Cheng/
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3714

4/6/2010 /A. K./
Examiner, Art Unit 3714